

# IN CONGRESS,

MAY 15, 1776.

**W**HEREAS his Britannic Majesty, in conjunction with the Lords and Commons of Great-Britain, has by a late Act of Parliament excluded the inhabitants of these United Colonies from the protection of his Crown: AND WHEREAS no answer whatever to the humble Petitions of the Colonies for redress of grievances and reconciliation with Great-Britain, has been or is likely to be given; but the whole force of that kingdom, aided by foreign mercenaries, is to be exerted for the destruction of the good people of these Colonies: AND WHEREAS it appears absolutely irreconcilable to reason and good conscience, for the people of these Colonies now to take the oaths and affirmations necessary for the support of any government under the Crown of Great-Britain, and it is necessary that the exercise of every kind of authority under the said Crown should be totally suppressed, and all the powers of government exerted under the people of the Colonies, for the preservation of internal peace, virtue and good order, as well as for the defence of their lives, liberties and properties against the hostile invasions and cruel depredations of their enemies:—

RESOLVED therefore, That it be recommended to the respective Assemblies and Conventions of the United Colonies, where no government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs has been hitherto established, to adopt such government as shall in the opinion of the Representatives of the people best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general.

Extract from the Minutes,

CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

*To the INHABITANTS of VERMONT, a Free and Independent State, bounding on the River CONNECTICUT and Lake CHAMPLAIN.*

GENTLEMEN,

PHILADELPHIA, April 11, 1777.

**N**UMBERS of you are knowing to the zeal with which I have exerted myself in your behalf from the beginning of your struggle with the New-York Monopolizers. As the Supreme Arbitrator of right has smiled on the just cause of North-America at large, you in a peculiar manner have been highly favored. God has done by you the best thing commonly done for our species. He has put it fairly in your power to help yourselves.

I have taken the minds of several leading Members in the Honorable the Continental Congress, and can assure you that you have nothing to do but send attested copies of the Recommendation to take up government to every township in your district, and invite all your freeholders and inhabitants to meet in their respective townships and chuse members for a General Convention, to meet at an early day to chuse Delegates for the General Congress, a Committee of Safety, and to form a Constitution for your State.

Your friends here tell me that some are in doubt whether Delegates from your district would be admitted into Congress. I tell you to organize fairly, and make the experiment, and I will ensure your success at the risk of my reputation as a man of honor or common sense. Indeed they can by no means refuse you! You have as good a right to chuse how you will be governed, and by whom, as they had.

I have recommended to your Committee the Constitution of Pennsylvania for a model, which, with a very little alteration, will, in my opinion, come as near perfection as any thing yet concerted by mankind. This Constitution has been sifted with all the criticism that a band of despots were masters of, and has bid defiance to their united powers.

The alteration I would recommend is, that all the Bills intended to be passed into Laws should be laid before the Executive Board for their perusal and proposals of amendment. All the difference then between such a Constitution and those of Connecticut and Rhode-Island, in the grand outlines is, that in one case the Executive power can advise and in the other compel. For my own part, I esteem the people at large the true proprietors of governmental power. They are the supreme constituent power, and of course their immediate Representatives are the supreme delegate power; and as soon as the delegate power gets too far out of the hands of the constituent power, a tyranny is in some degree established.

Happy are you that in laying the foundation of a new government, you have a digest drawn from the purest fountains of antiquity, and improved by the readings and observations of the great Doctor FRANKLIN, DAVID RITTENHOUSE, Esq; and others. I am certain you may build on such a basis a system which will transmit liberty and happiness to posterity.

Let the scandalous practice of bribing men by places, commissions, &c. be held in abhorrence among you. By entrusting only men of capacity and integrity in public affairs, and by obliging even the best men to fall into the common mass of the people every year, and be sensible of their need of the popular good will to sustain their political importance; is your liberties well secured. These plans effectually promise this security.

May Almighty God smile upon your arduous and important undertaking, and inspire you with that wisdom, virtue, public spirit and unanimity, which ensures success in the most hazardous enterprises!

I am, Gentlemen, Your sincere friend and humble servant,

THOMAS YOUNG.

APRIL 12, 1777.

**Y**OUR Committee have obtained for you a copy of the Recommendation of Congress to all such bodies of men as looked upon themselves returned to a state of nature, to adopt such government as should in the opinion of the Representatives of the people best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general.

You may perhaps think strange that nothing further is done for you at this time than to send you this extract. But if you consider that till you incorporate and actually announce to Congress your having become a body politic, they cannot treat with you as a free State. While New-York claims you as subjects of that government, my humble opinion is, your own good sense will suggest to you, that no time is to be lost in availing yourselves of the same opportunity your assuming mistress is improving to establish a dominion for herself and you too.

A WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT.



Cross 15649-  
but printed at  
Philadelphia. See  
Bib. File.

November, 1935  
-16806-  
P. S. Collins